

2001 Annual Report Executive Summary

Central Appalachia Enterprise Community

A general overview of the progress made by the Central Appalachia Empowerment Zone (CAEZ) during 2000 is highlighted by two major accomplishments; revisiting the community and the creation of jobs within the CAEZ. Fourteen community meetings were held in the nine census tracts comprising the Central Appalachia Empowerment Zone. These meetings identified new concerns and needs of our community as well as providing an evaluation of our previous and ongoing efforts. The input from 159 citizens provided us with a road map as to where we need to go. We now need to convert the needs and concerns to benchmarks and proceed to meet those needs.

CAEZ Benchmark #28, Industrial Site at Mt. Hope, West Virginia, moved from planning to completion of the site development phase. As of June 18, 2001, CAEZ owned a fully developed industrial park with 20 acres of land ready for building. Negotiations began with a prospective tenant in August 2001, and by October 17th, 2001: signed lease purchase agreement \$2,977,920.00; closed bank loan \$1,940,000.00; contractor hired \$1,938,403.00, 105 people now have jobs as a result of our effort. The Building will be completed on February 14th, 2002, with the tenant moving in immediately. The idea of coordinating fifteen different parties and agencies with each playing a role that was crucial to the success of the project was at times overwhelming. All participants did what was necessary to complete the goal.

The mission of CAEZ is to help create a sustainable community that provides opportunities and services that are available to all residents of this area. Our efforts are changing a rural, poverty-stricken area with pervasive unemployment into a strong, vibrant, growing community. A tremendous amount of work remains, but we have taken our first steps to accomplish our mission. CAEZ ends this executive summary with a heartfelt; "THANKS USDA. TOGETHER, WE MADE A DIFFERENCE."